

U-2 FLIER MOVES INTO VIRGINIA APARTMENT; UNRECOGNIZED ON TRIPS INTO TOWN

Powers Is Just Another U. S. Worker Here Now

By WALTER WINGO

U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, at a private party here over the week-end, filled in some gaps in the accounts of his capture by the Soviets, his 21 months of imprisonment and his sudden release two months ago in exchange for master spy Rudolph Abel.

Mr. Powers, 32, who has been living in the Washington area almost unnoticed the past few weeks, attended a "fish fry" at the home of a friend, Howard A. Strain, 326 Onondaga Drive, Forest Heights.

The mild-mannered Mr. Powers seemed embarrassed to be the center of attention, with guests asking his autograph and questioning him about his life since bailing out of a spy plane over Russia on May 1, 1960, eight days before a scheduled summit conference.

"When I was coming down on that parachute, I thought the people below were going to string me up from the nearest tree," Mr. Powers recalled.

"I'll bet you never expected a few weeks ago that you'd be here today, did you?" one guest asked.

"I sure didn't," Mr. Powers replied.

BOOKS FROM HOME

"What are those Moscow jails like?" another wanted to know.

"Well, actually, the jail they put me in was about 120 miles from Moscow," Mr. Powers said. "I had a small cell with two bunks and two stools and a little place where they shoved in food. There wasn't much to do there but read."

He said he read James Michener's "Hawaii" and many books on the Civil War, which his wife, Barbara, sent him, and several works by Tolstoi and other pre-revolutionary Russians.

"I did read one modern Russian novel, 'Quiet Flows the Don,' and I was pretty excited by it," Mr. Powers added. "Barbara said she was going to send me 'Dr. Zhivago,' but she didn't because she thought it might just cause more trouble."

"At first the prison officials refused to let me see my books for several days after they arrived from home. Maybe they had to read everything sent me. Later they just flipped thru the pages to see if anything was concealed in them."

Once, while the head warden was on duty, copies of Time and Newsweek magazines were delivered to his cell, he said, but that never happened again.

FOUR MONTHS OF SOLITARY

After four months of solitary confinement, Mr. Powers was joined by a Latvian prisoner who was serving his sixth year of a 15-year sentence. He, like most everyone else in the prison, had been convicted of simply "crimes against the state," Mr. Powers said.

"I guess they picked him for my cell mate because he spoke English," Mr. Powers said. "I wasn't sure if he was



—News Photo by Lou Hollis.

Mr. Powers talks with his sister, Mrs. Janice Melvin, of 1604 Nealon Drive, Falls Church, and her son, Bryan, 4. Another of his five sisters, Mrs. Jessie Hileman, of 318 Audrey Lane, Glass Manor, also attended the party.

a plant, but I don't think so. If he was, he sure earned his pay. He was in there with me for 17 months straight.

"He read me the Russian newspaper and helped me learn some Russian. I was half way thru translating a Russian edition of Robinson Crusoe when I was released."

For exercise, he said, he was allowed to run and do push-ups every day in a small court. He said he applied to be switched to a work camp, but was turned down.

"Once, I was taken for a tour of Moscow," he said. "It was the special tour they give to foreigners—except I wasn't allowed to get out of the car and I was crammed between guards."

OFFICIAL GAVE HIM FIRST HINT

He said the first hint he got that he would be released came from a prison official who asked him: "How would you like to go to Moscow tomorrow without any guards?"

"That sounds like it would be an interesting trip," Mr. Powers said he replied.

"My cell mate was positive that it meant I was going home, and we were both so excited we stayed up all night talking," Mr. Powers recalled.

When Mr. Powers arrived back in the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency secluded him in three spots in Maryland and Virginia while agents questioned him, he said, but he would not specify where.

During that period—while the whole country was speculating on his whereabouts—Mr. Powers said he visited Baltimore one evening and had dinner two other nights at Hogate's and O'Donnell's, popular seafood spots in Washington, without anyone recognizing him.

"There was only one time that I think I might have been spotted," Mr. Powers said. "I was getting a haircut in a barber shop in McLean, Va., and I noticed another customer was staring at me."

"I just went on reading my magazine. When I left I saw the man talking to the barber, and they both were watching me."

OVERWHELMED BY RECEPTION

After appearing before Congress, Mr. Powers said he was overwhelmed by the reception given him by the people of Wise County, Va., where he's from.

"Later, Barbara got some letters criticizing her for visiting her folks in Georgia and not being with me at the affair," Mr. Powers said. "It really hurt her feelings, because she would have been there if we'd known there was going to be a big reception or anything like that. But we hadn't expected any fanfare."

"As I said before, I was just hoping people would treat me like a normal guy who did a job."

Since moving into Hunting Towers Apartments in Alexandria, Mr. Powers said he has been downtown several times without being recognized.

He was spotted, however, earlier this month at Pope's Creek, near La Plata, Md. When word got around, people lined up to get his autograph. One man asked Mr. Powers to sign his name on the back of a live crab.

STILL WORKING FOR THE CIA

Mr. Powers said he's still working for the CIA, but has not flown an airplane since he climbed out of his shattered U-2 in mid-air.

"I really miss flying," he said. "I hope to get up again soon."

He said the only task he's sure he'll be doing in the near future is preparing his income tax papers. The Internal Revenue Service granted him a 90-day extension on filing and told him his \$50,000 in back pay can be spread over the past two years.

The host offered Mr. Powers a drink, but he refused. He explained that after two years of forced abstinence, he's approaching drinking with caution.

"I was handed a martini on the airliner back to the States, and I really felt it," Mr. Powers said.

Somebody at the party put a twist record on the phonograph and Mrs. Powers pulled her husband, modestly protesting, to the dance floor.

The jet pilot gave the twist a brief, but courageous try, then quit, saying, "That dance just doesn't feel right. I guess I haven't been back long enough."

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